

Harris

Robinson

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Alicia Patterson, Editor and Publisher
John Van Doorn, Promotion Manager

ADMINISTRATIVE FILE

Harris Robin (Curly)
to Park, John J.
X Newsday

The attached news story appeared
in today's editions of Newsday. I
thought it might be of interest to you.

DAILY CIRCULATION OVER 290,000



Teamster Aide Held in Bribery

By John Cummings

Mineola — A New York publicist and widely-known Cafe Society figure was arrested last night and held without bail on a charge of trying to bribe a Newsday reporter to write favorable stories about East Coast Teamster boss John J. O'Rourke.

Three other men — reportedly including O'Rourke's brother and a Nassau detective—were being sought today on charges of using bribes and threats in an effort to obtain secret grand jury minutes. The minutes related to the case in which O'Rourke and 14 others are accused of extortion in the jukebox industry. Police said that the trio tried to bribe another Nassau detective with \$20,000 to get the minutes—and then threatened to kill him.

The publicist, Robin (Cush) Harris, 47, of 409 E. 52nd St., Manhattan, was picked up at his home last night on an indictment returned shortly after the alleged bribe attempt. He was booked at Nassau police headquarters in Mineola, where he identified himself only as a "writer." When asked what he wrote, he answered: "Stories."

Harris would not say, under questioning that he was working for O'Rourke, but he did admit knowing the East Coast Teamster chieftain. Officials commented that "we got absolutely nothing out of him."

He was accused of having paid Newsday reporter Bob Greene \$2,500 in cash—and of having offered an additional \$5,000—for a series of stories favorable to O'Rourke. Greene had gone through with the payoff earlier in the day after having informed Managing Editor Alan Hathway and Nassau District Attorney Levine. Levine pressed the newspaper's "courageous cooperation" in bringing the case to light.

Levine and Assistant District Attorney William Cahn, the head of Levine's racket bureau, an-

nounced the indictments in both cases at 5:45 PM yesterday, shortly after the charges had been returned. They said that the offer to the detective, whose name was withheld, was made last month. The investigator, who works in the rackets bureau, immediately informed Cahn and Levine. The bribe offer was made, Cahn noted, at the time O'Rourke was asking a Queens Supreme Court judge to order the grand jury testimony turned over to him. Cahn said that two of the defendants in this indictment were members of the Teamster union. It was reported that one was O'Rourke's brother, Gene, and that the third defendant was a Nassau detective. John O'Rourke was questioned about one of the trio last night but provided no information, Cahn said.

They each are charged with one felon's count of bribery and one count each of conspiracy, a misdemeanor. The testimony involved was given to the grand jury last May, when O'Rourke and 14 others were indicted on charges of extorting money from jukebox renters. Cahn would not say yesterday whether the new indictments would delay the scheduled start of O'Rourke's trial Monday.

The offer to Greene was detailed to the grand jury yesterday by the reporter and Hathway shortly after a second payment was made to Greene. That was the essence of their testimony.

The man hired by O'Rourke originally approached Hathway last month and asked to meet the reporter handling the jukebox story. No bribe was offered at that time. Hathway refused him to Greene, who later was asked by the defendant to meet him at a Nassau restaurant. When money was offered if Greene would write a series of stories favorable to O'Rourke, Greene refused it and reported the matter to Hathway.

The managing editor called the district attorney, and then told Greene that if another offer was made, to report it immediately. The next day, Greene re-

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TEAMING UP to explain two indictments involving Teamster figures yesterday are Nassau District Attorney Levine, right, and Assistant District Attorney William Cahn, chief of the rackets bureau.

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received a call from Harris, asking the reporter to meet him at another restaurant Tuesday. Hathway, after learning of this, again informed Cahn and Levine, who assigned detectives to the case. At Tuesday's meeting, the man gave Greene \$30. Yesterday, they met again at a North Shore restaurant, where Greene received \$200 in cash and an offer of an additional \$5,000. Detectives were nearby to observe both meetings.

The \$5,000 was contingent, the indictment said, on Greene writing a "series of articles favorable to John O'Rourke and also writing stories about O'Rourke's upcoming trial that would be sympathetic."

Harris was brought in by Dets. John Moran and Harold Shepherd to be booked at 11:30 last night. The publicist, whose wavy, prematurely-gray hair had earned him the nickname of Curly, wore a conservative blue suit and a blue tie. He started to lunge at a cameraman when he was brought into headquarters, but then stopped and hid his head instead. Seconds later, he changed his mind again and turned squarely toward the cameras to pose. After being booked, fingerprinted and photographed, he was questioned by detectives and Cahn. He was ordered held overnight at the county jail for arraignment.

Harris, a habitue of Manhattan night clubs, is known along Broadway as a man with innumerable contacts. Although he denied any connection with a public-relations firm while under questioning last night, he is known to have done publicity work for several interesting clients, including Gen. Marcos Perez Jimenez, the former dictator of Venezuela.

He said that he had been a reporter for a New York City newspaper about 20 years ago.

Harris said that he was married and had two children—Amanda, 10, and Stephen, 8. Although he denied it, his wife was reported to be the former Patricia Donnelly, 39, the Miss America of 1939. Harris insisted that his wife's name was actually Patricia Donley. He said that she had been born in Illinois; when asked if she had ever been a Miss Michigan, he denied it—but with a smile.

At a press conference earlier yesterday, Levine hailed Newsday for its cooperation in the case. "This required courageous cooperation on the part of Newsday," Levine said, "and I cannot stress too greatly how much this newspaper has helped us, not only on this case but in ferreting out other racketeers in Nassau County."

The charge against Harris is corrupting an employee, a violation of Section 439 of the state penal code. The offense, a misdemeanor, carries a maximum fine of \$1,000 and a six-month jail term.

Greene, who formerly worked as an investigator for the Senate rackets committee while on leave of absence from Newsday, spotlighted garbage rackets in Nassau and turned up evidence that led to the conviction of Vincent and Nazzio Scallante and Bernard Adelsheim, boss of Teamster Local 815.

Greene and Hathway also testified before the Senate committee early this year about the activities of Long Island racketeer Irving Bitz and the attempts of the New York Newspaper and Mail Deliverers Union to organize Newsday. Both testified before the federal grand jury that indicted last year five present and former officials of the union. Bitz has pleaded guilty and is awaiting sentencing. —23

ADMINISTRATIVE FILE

Harris, Robin (Curley)

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Slenth, Press Agent Get Bail In Bribe Tries

Robin (Curley) Harris, 47, of 400 E. 52d St., press agent for O'Rourke, Teamsters Union was released in \$7,000 bail yesterday in Nassau County Court, Mineola, on his arraignment on charges of attempting to bribe Newsday reporter Robert Greene. Harris was accused of trying to bribe Greene to soft-pedal stories on O'Rourke, who is scheduled to go on trial Monday in Mineola along with 14 others on charges of extortion, coercion and conspiracy in the attempted organization of Teamsters locals in Nassau County.

Detective Arraigned
In a related case, Nassau County Detective Richard Johnson, 40, of 810 Ardmore Place, Bellmore was released in \$7,000 bail on an indictment charging bribery in an attempt to secure the grand jury minutes in the indictment of O'Rourke.

The indictment charges that Johnson attempted to induce another detective, Harold C. Shepherd, to allow him to take the minutes overnight for transcription. The promised fee for the two detectives was reputed to be \$20,000. Shepherd reported the offer to his superior, Assistant District Attorney William Cahn.

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Called 'Inside Man' in Plot

Detective Held in Bribery To Get Teamster Jury Data

Special to the Herald Tribune

MISCELLA. L. I. Nov. 5.—A detective assigned to the Nassau County District Attorney's staff was charged last night as the "inside man" in a plot to steal the grand jury minutes that led to the indictment of John J. O'Rourke, second ranking Teamsters official, for racketeering.

The detective, Richard J. Johnson, 37, of 814 Ardmore Place, Bayside, L. I., was arraigned today in Nassau County Court on charges of bribery and conspiracy and was suspended without pay. A former truck driver, he joined the force in 1951 and was promoted to detective three years ago.

"Heard Rumors"

Matthew W. Levine, Nassau County District Attorney, said he was shocked to learn a member of his staff was implicated in the plot, but added: "We had heard rumors that O'Rourke's defense would go to any lengths to get the grand jury minutes." O'Rourke, who is vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, was arrested in May with twelve other Teamsters officials. His trial is to start next Monday but may be delayed by a defense motion to examine the grand jury minutes. The motion is still under consideration.

A more orthodox method of getting a look at the minutes, which are locked in a vault in the County courthouse, was described today by Mr. Levine.

He said that on Oct. 19, Detective Harold C. Shepherd, who has access to the key of the room where the minutes are stored, was offered \$1,000 by Johnson to get the key.

Detective Shepherd "immediately" notified William Cahn, Assistant District Attorney in charge of racketeering, and was told to strike along with Johnson.

The two met a number of times, and some of their conversations were recorded. On Oct. 23, Johnson was handed a key and told Detective Shepherd: "This is good—the boys have told me you'll get \$25,000 instead of \$1,000." After the words of praise came these words of warning, according to

Mr. Levine: "Johnson, you know you cross me I'll kill you."

Others Accused

Three other men were indicted with Johnson for bribery. Two are Teamsters officials who allegedly prevailed upon John to try and obtain the minutes. "We know who they are," Mr. Levine said, "but we can't find them."

The fourth man is William Harris, forty-seven, of 400 E. 85th St., a public relations man and a former reporter for "The Daily News" of New York. He was charged with trying to corrupt a reporter on the Long Island daily "Newsday."

According to Mr. Levine, Mr. Harris used his newspaper contacts to find out that Bob Greene, a "Newsday" reporter, would cover the O'Rourke trial. He then allegedly offered Mr. Greene \$5,000 to go easy on O'Rourke in his coverage. Mr. Greene told the story to the Assistant Attorney's office and accepted \$250 from Harris during meetings observed by the police. Mr. Harris was arrested and held in \$5,000 bail.